

CHAIRMAN DESAI: Thank you very much, Mr. Papadatos.

I would say we are truly impressed at the commitment shown by the government of Greece for hosting this, the efforts which have already been put in.

Let me try and suggest a way on how to -- a way forward from now, keeping in mind there are very clear indications that I have received from some of you that you do need a little more time to react to some of the ideas which have been thrown up here.

So I will not try and give any sort of definitive summary or a sense of closure to the issues that are -- that we have been discussing.

I think what I will try and do is first to say what is the minimum that we have to agree on, which I think we have -- it's acceptable so that we can at least start the process of -- with the government -- with our host.

Because it's -- you know, we've only got, what, seven to eight months.

And as Mr. Papadatos said, I've organized a lot of these things, and I can tell you, that's not a lot of time.

So we need to start this process of discussion between the government of Greece and the United Nations sufficiently -- well, we have to start it, frankly, now, if we can.

So what does this mean?

What does this require?

What is it that I think we can comfortably say?

Certainly we are having the forum there.

It will be in October/November.

We hope the dates will be set in a few days, after some consultations which are going on.

We will, of course, make sure through e-flash, et cetera, that all of you get to know this date.

I'm sorry I could not announce them today, because the consultations are not over, and we do need to consult, because it's very important that these dates are consistent with normal international practice.

You can't just decide them arbitrarily.

But we hope in a couple of days that will be done.

That certainly will help.

We certainly see this as a forum which will be very -- in a sense, a forum open to open participation.

And in terms of numbers, we are -- I have said that perhaps one should take the numbers who attended the open consultations for WGIG as a baseline.

You should certainly expect at least that much, and perhaps mostly what we are looking at is at least 500 to 600 people attending this forum.

It could be more.

But this is the baseline that we work with, because, in a sense, we -- there is a general concept that it is more or less participation similar to the way participation took place in the WGIG open consultations, and we do need -- they need to have some idea of how many people they should be working for in terms of space and so on.

I think we would, of course, have a -- have to have a host country agreement with -- between the United Nations and Greece.

The summit is a product of a United Nations process.

The secretariat support is being provided by the United Nations.

And for legal reasons, we will have to have a host country agreement with Greece.

I incidentally here mention that the very normal practice in the United Nations when you have a host country which is taking on the responsibility of organizing a meeting which the United Nations has been asked to convene, it's fairly normal practice to request the host country to provide the chair for the process.

That has been the case with all the summits that we have run.

And that also is a simple solution of the issue of who is the chair of the process.

And it's a very common practice.

It's then entirely up to the host country to decide whether it will be somebody from the private sector, somebody from the civil society sector, somebody from the government sector.

It's their responsibility.

But we don't -- as the United Nations, we don't get into that issue.

I think we have not had an agreement, or I don't sense a consensus on the issue of the management structure for the forum.

There have been various ideas which have been thrown out.

I think terms like "Program Committee," "steering committee," et cetera have been used.

Sometimes the terminology has caused confusion.

Let's for the moment simply say a multistakeholder group.

What that will be called we can leave open.

And a multistakeholder group, what people have different ideas, A, on whether such a group is -- people want some time to think whether such a group is necessary.

I think my sense is that a very large number of people here do believe it is.

But, in fairness, we have to give people time to react to that idea.

And second, how it will be constituted, whether it will be constituted as a single group, if so, how large, or whether it is constituted as multiple groups.

So what I am proposing is that this is one of the issues on which we need a response relatively quickly, which is, let us say, ten -- about ten days from now.

I don't think it's going to be possible within this time frame to organize another consultation like this.

And apart from that, it would be very burdensome for a lot of people who have come from outside to come once again.

I was going to suggest that we have discussed this.

We have heard each others' views quite extensively.

And I would suggest that those who feel they need a little more time to think about this take that time, and just communicate their views through Mr. Markus Kummer to the secretary general.

To me and then to the secretary general.

And I -- we will, of course, faithfully -- our job is to faithfully reflect the range of views that have been presented.

I am stressing this because I think this program committee needs to get working as fast -- or whatever we wish to call it, if constituted, needs to get cracking as soon as possible.

And as some people said, when it gets moving, perhaps at its first meeting there could be a round of consultations.

But my experience is that even if we decide -- once and if and when we decide to constitute such a group, the very process of constituting it, getting names from regional groups or from various, you know, organizations or civil society and business will itself take a couple of weeks, and then trying to sort that out into a set of names will take time.

And that's the reason why I am saying please, if we can have the views in about ten days, it will be very -- if we can then think in terms of having this group, if we were to constitute it, functioning hopefully before the end of March.

I don't think we have to -- we perhaps had more of a discussion on what is the -- what are the themes which should be covered in the IGF than we needed to have.

I say more because I started rereading the text.

And the text does not rule out anything.

The text does not say that this will be discussed and this will not be discussed.

So I don't think the issue is at all, is this something that I -- you know, that this forum should discuss.

I think it's more useful if, in your further comments, a second thing on which you may comment, I don't think the issue is should or should not the forum discuss this ever.

Is this part of the work of the forum.

But simply what do you think are the priorities for this October.

That's all.

Simply what are the priorities.

Nothing to do with, you know, is this a part of the forum mandate or not.

I would say the forum language is pretty general.

And at this point, instead of a futile discussion on should this or should this not be discussed in the forum, just focus on a very simple thing.

Given your political priorities, given your sense of what the mood outside there is like, what do you think are the issues?

I would suggest that perhaps it'll be useful if those who wish to contribute were to fix their ideas on three major themes.

It doesn't have to be -- it can be five; it can be six.

But I would say three because of the fact that, you know, we have a certain number of days, a number of days, which is another point which we need to communicate fairly clearly.

I would say that I have heard a lot of views, many different views, two to three days; five days.

So I am subtly suggesting to our friends in Greece that they plan on the basis of a four-day meeting.

Let's work with this.

Including, you know, the opening ceremony, et cetera.

And let's work on that.

It's, frankly, very arbitrary.

But we have to have some basis to start.

We can't just leave it for April, May, June, or something.

Because then it's too late.

In terms of the facilities, structure of the meeting itself, many very interesting ideas have come up.

Again, I don't think we need to -- we will not set the themes.

The themes will come afterwards.

In fact, my own personal feeling is that this has to be decided by the program group or whatever it is that is set up, rather than being set from New York.

Why -- So I would not even try and summarize as to what it would be.

But in terms of the physical facilities they need to provide, I would suspect that what we are looking at is probably a place for a plenary meeting, which will be, of course, used for the opening and closing, but will also be available for the major thematic discussions.

I'm sure when you get down to it, when the management group is constituted, they will have some ideas on how this thematic discussion should be conducted.

I have some ideas which I will certainly pass on to the management group from my experiences as to what would make it interesting.

But a plenary space which would allow the entire -- all of the people attending, or a substantial portion of those attending, to participate in this -- the major thematic discussions over these days.

And that's the space where we would have -- where we would request them to provide full translation facilities in all six U.N. languages.

Around this, I think we will have to, perhaps, suggest to them that there should be space for smaller meetings, panel discussions, roundtables, working groups. And we do not know what it would be. This would depend on when the planning starts. For lack of any better number, I would say that let us, as a starting point, I would suggest to the Greek authorities start with five, at least. But if the room, the space that you have has more space there, that's better. It's always better, because my experience is once you start this process, then a lot of

people want to hold roundtables, panels and so on. And you will find that the space gets used up pretty quickly.

Then my third plea, which again requires some advanced work, is I do take this message of this becoming a learning experience very seriously. And I hope that when you look at your site, that there is space there for the people who will be coming there not to participate in the debate but to showcase things, or to learn from other people. Something like a learning space.

I am very happy that ISOC has shown a strong interest in this, and I would suggest that perhaps this is something that, at a fairly early stage, we could perhaps -- there's no harm in their starting to think about this.

So my suggest is that we treat this as our starting point. We recognize that we do not have -- we have not yet come to any -- so I cannot report to the secretary-general that these are the range of views on issues like the multistakeholder management group, on issues like the themes, which should be discussed. And I will say that people have sought time for this, and that I would communicate a sense of the range of views. Because at the end of ten days, it's not as if everybody is going to agree, but I will have then a better sense of what the range of views is, and that I will communicate to the secretary-general on the basis of which he will take certain review, certain decisions, and we will proceed on that basis.

I think I have covered most of what I need to cover in terms of getting the process moving and started.

I think we've done many -- there's a lot of substantive discussion here which I -- for which it's very valuable but which is not immediately germane from the process. And logistical decisions about things that need to start straight away.

But I would say that perhaps the probative record that we have will be something that will be of great value.

There has been a great deal of discussion on the motion that you shouldn't just focus on this event, but you should also be focusing on IGF as a process for things happening which will feed into the IGF.

Certainly if it is a bottom-up process, it is not something which requires decision by anybody.

There's nothing whatever which stops people forming a group to contribute to the IGF.

I think one aspect of it which may require a little advanced work is a message I have heard very strongly from many people here, and that is the need for some type of regional process to contribute to this.

And that's not something which can be done at the last minute. You can't just say suddenly, you know, three months or four months before, "Oh, please get off the ground."

So my own feeling is that listening to people here, it will not be a bad idea if one were to suggest -- in fact, I would suggest, to the U.N. that they may wish to get in touch with the regional commissions to see how, within the resources that the regional commissions have, they could start thinking about what sort of regional contribution they could make to this process. Of course, it's very difficult till they know what the themes are, but at least one can start getting them to think about how they would do it. And we are happy the ECA is here, and perhaps they will start giving thought to it straight away and communicate with their fellow regional commissions in this area.

But in many areas I think it will be left basically to people to do it. I don't think it requires a directive from anybody, least of all the secretary-general.

One more -- besides -- one more point I would make here is the importance of getting certain things started at the national level. Some countries already have multistakeholder processes, et cetera. But I think it's very important that if the IGF at the global level is to work, it should have some -- there should be a process at the national level which can feed into that.

Now, it's possible that it's perfectly fine in many cases for, say, the

government to participate, for industry from that country to participate, for civil society from that country to participate on a totally independent basis. That will be fine. There's no harm in that. But My own sense, particularly in developing countries is, that much of this will be facilitated if there is a national process. And I just leave this with you. Again, this does not require any sort of decision by anybody. It's up to each country whether they do it or not, and I simply leave it with you as a thought and as a reflection.

And I think it's very important to -- I would like to -- the last thing I wish to say is I think it's very important that we place this on a basis which is structurally sound, which does not depend on individuals.

I say this because I have heard too often, you know, about mr. Desai, mr. Kummer. "You know, mr, Desai and mr. Kummer are mortal men." and one of them at least is looking forward to putting his feet up.

[Laughter]

>> CHAIRMAN DESAI: So I would say we should put things on a much more structured basis. And I would hope that when we finally end up with the IGF, it will be something that will be on the structured basis.

So I think things are moving ahead reasonably well, and I wish we could have done a little bit more on some of these issues, but I'm not too worried. I think ten days is not an unreasonable amount of time, and we can certainly get this thing -- some idea of what the range of views is so the S.G. can take a view and then I think we can be in business.

This is more or less what I wanted to say